(5) 6

LETTER

FROM THE

States General

Of the United Provinces of the Low Countries

TO THE

KING

OF

GREAT BRITAIN,

Dated the $\frac{9}{19}$ *Decemb.* 1673.

At the Hague, Anno 1673.

LETTER

FROM THE

States General

of the United Provinces of the Low Countries

TO THE

KING

OF

GREAT BRITAIN,

Dated the 9. Decemb. 1673.

At the Hague, Anno 1673.

A LETTER from the *States General* of the *United Provinces of the Low Countries* to the KING of *GREAT BRITAIN*, &c.

SIR,

WHatever may have induced Your Majesty to write to us that which the Trumpeter we had sent Your Majesty hath delivered us from You, dated the 7th. of *November*, we do think our selves bound to return you our thanks for the Honour you are pleased to do us; but we cannot but let you know at the same time, how much we are troubled to see Your Majesty so prepossessed against us; and that those Ministers whom you most trust have hitherto had the skill to influence Your Majesty so far, as we see they have done, by persuading you to aver so many things which they supposed were out of your memory, and which they knew in their Consciences to be contrary to all truth.

For this Reason Sir we do not think fit to give a particular Answer to all the heads of the Letter Your Majesty hath written to us, that we may not give a new occasion to those that have so possessed Your Majesty to exasperate you further, but referring our selves to the Deductions we are necessitated to set forth in Answer to your Manifesto, which was Published in your Majesties name, we shall satisfy our selves with declaring here unto your Majesty, that as we have alledged nothing in the Letter we had written to your Majesty, whereof we have not in our hands authentick and undeniable Proofs, so we shall be ready at all times to produce them before your Majesty wheresoever you will be pleased to give us a fitter oportunity for it. And with all since your Majesty

(ſuppoſing that what information you had received from your Miniſters, [illegible] hath complained to your Parliament of our obſtinate Averſneſs to Peace, and that the Houſe of Commons according to their wonted Prudence have been pleaſed to ſuſpend their judgments therein, and to give us thereby an occaſion to lay our Innocenſe more open, and to give more publick Convincing proof of the ſincerity of our intentions, we have thought it neceſſary to add, that to let your Majeſty and all the Kingdom ſee that we do not affect to ſpeake of Peace (as is layd to our charge) without really deſiring the ſame, and that we are far from intrenching our ſelves within general words without coming to any particular Overtures, we are ready to renew with your Majeſty the Treaty which you concluded with us at *Breda* in the year 1667 and to explain the 19th Article concerning the *Flagg*, in ſuch manner as may prevent any further diſpute for the future, and that may regulate and ſettle the practice thereof without any Ambiguity. And ſeeing your Majeſty judged the ſaid Treaty ſo juſt and equitable that, for ſome years after we received more proofs of your Majeſties friendſhip, and you entred with us into ſtricter Alliances then ever, we do propoſe the ſame as the moſt ſolid foundation of a firm and durable Peace. And we hope Your Majeſty will not refuſe to return to your former amity with us upon the ſame terms which you have heretofore approved of, the rather becauſe the intereſt of the *Proteſtant Religion*, and many other reſpects relating to the good of both Nations, ought to be a ſtrong argument on both ſides to unite us again ſo much the ſooner. Moreover, becauſe ſome have endeavoured to perſwade your Majeſty that we have Violated our Treaties, and committed ſeverall injuſtices, for which ſatisfaction is demmanded, we are alſo ready to ſend forthwith our Ambaſſadors to your Majeſty, to give you a more faithful account of the truth then you have received from our enemies, and to examine in your Preſence all the infractions that are layd to our charge, with a ſolemn promiſe to repair and give ſatisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries either your Majeſty or your Subjects may have received from our Officers ſince the aforeſaid Treaty of *Breda* to the beginning

of

of this War: and to the end that this enquiry may not retard the conclusion of a Peace which we so earnestly desire, & which is necessary for the good of all Christendom, we do offer to your Majesty for a greater security the Garranty of our Allies for the performance of the Promise we make here, and which we are willing to have inserted in the Treaty which shall be concluded, to make the same more Authentick. Lastly, to demonstrate to your Majesty how far we value your friendship, we do proffer you likewise to restore the new *Neather Lands*, with any other place or Colony our Armes may have conquered during this War, not doubting but that your Majesty will not refuse neither to restore to us what Territories or Forts your Majesty may have conquered.

But because your Majesty seemeth above all to complain, that we do highly offend you by proposing to your Majesty to leave your *Allies*, to whom you have promised not to Treat separately; whilst we do establish it for a fundamental point, that we cannot break the word we have given ours without wronging our Honour, as if Your Majesty was to value yours less: we pray you consider there is a vast difference between your engagements and ours, as well as in the carriage of those we are respectively allied with; and your Majesty may with as much justice as glory quench a Fire as hath already spread its self much further then you did think: whereas we could not forsake our *Allies* without being guilty of the highest ingratitude, and without destroying *Europe* by destroying our selves. When your Majesty did at first joyn with our Enemies, you did seem to intend only to bring our Commonwealth low; but now the War is grown a General one, and the *Spanish Low Countries* (for the preservation of which your Majesty hath always appeared so zealous) are no less concerned in it then our selves as well as the greatest part of the Empire.

Besides, your Majesty hath so much the less reason to continue in your former Alliance, since your Allies themselves have altered the nature of this War, and have forced our friends to declare so much the sooner in our behalf; whilst neither his Imperial Majesty, nor the Most Serene King of *Spain*, could bear no longer with the Hostilities the *French* committed

committed one day in the *Low Countries*, and in several Provinces of the Empire, where they had already mastered an Electoral Town: But not to enter into these Particulars, and laying aside several other Arguments of the same kind, your Majesty hath but too much cause to forsake an Ally that hath sought nothing in this War but his own private advantage, and who in the most important occasions, hath taken care of nothing less than of your Majesties concerns, not to say worse: And if your Majesty doth still doubt the truth of it, let not your Majesty rely upon what those that are friends to *France* do tell you, but be pleased duly to examine what passed at *Utrecht* the last year, between the *French* Ministers and our Deputies, and you will see plainly how upright the carriage of your Allies hath been to be convinced of it. It is even sufficient to read the Proposals which *France* made then to us; wherein there is not the least word relating to your Majesty, and whilst our other Deputies were kept at *Hampton Court* without granting them any Audience, we were pressed hard at *Utrecht* to agree upon, and conclude a Treaty without your Majesties Participation: and to quicken us the more, we were told, that unless we granted within five days what was demanded of us, they would afterwards raise their Demands higher. We might add to this several other Overtures which have since been made to us, wherein as little care was taken of your Majesty; but by reason these have been less publick, how real soever they are we shall not insist upon them, and will only for a final proof of the Obligations your Allies have laid upon your Majesty, put you in mind of what hath passed in the Sea-fights, whereof we'l have no other Witnesses, and appeal to no other Judges than those that have had the command of your Majesties Fleets, with the rest of the Officers and Seamen. But as for us, since our Allies have carried themselves in a manner so different, that they have laid upon us such Obligations, as we cannot sufficiently express, that withal we are entred with them into this Alliance out of an unavoidable necessity, and for the good of all *Europe*; and lastly, (as we have said it before) that we cannot leave them without undoing our selves, and exposing to an im-

imminent danger the safety of Christendom, Your Majesty ought not to wonder if we cannot consent to break our word to them, nor take it ill if we endeavour to perswade your Majesty to follow your true interest, and to take a resolution, which would be as generous, and as just, as it would prove beneficial to your Kingdom, and to your Majesties neighbours. To which we may add, that a separate Treaty is so much the more necessary and warrantable, by reason of the absolute stop which is put to the Conferences at *Collen* by the obstinate denial the *French* have made some months since, to grant the necessary passes to the Ministers of the Duke of *Lorrain* (one of our Allies) and to admit him as a Principal in the negotiation of Peace. This, Sir, is what we have thought fit both to represent, and to offer unto your Majesty, in answer to what there was most essential in your Letter, and we conceive hopes that if your Majesty will never so little reflect upon the same, you will own that nothing beyond it can be demanded of us with any justice, not being able to perswade our selves, neither that your Majesty would without need, as well as without advantage, countenance any longer the Armes of the *French*, not only against us, but also against some other of your antient Allies, who are ingaged to run the same fortune with us; nor to indanger still both all *Europe*, and the Protestant Religion. Wee'l expect with great impatience your Majesties Resolution, upon which the rest and prosperity of so many Nations doth depend. In the mean time we pray God,

SIR,

To crown Your Majesties Reign with felicity, and to bless Your Royal Person with health and long life.

At the *Hague* the $\frac{9}{19}$ of *December*, 1673.

Your MAJESTIES

Most humble Servants

The States General of the United Provinces *of the* Low Countreys.

H. FAGEL.

By the Command of the aforesaid.